

# Tribalising fashion: The art of Exactitudes at Selfridges

## A collaboration with Photographers' Gallery

26 February – 20 April

Ultralounge, Lower Ground Floor, Selfridges Oxford Street - London

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Selfridges is delighted to open a new season of artistic and cultural events in its Oxford Street store's concept space, the Ultralounge, with **Exactitudes at Selfridges**, a collaboration with the Photographers' Gallery.

Exactitudes at Selfridges is a photographic project, created by Ellie Uyttenbroek and Ari Versluis two Dutch artists who were brought together by a shared passion for street fashion, dresscodes and collecting. Ellie and Ari have been collaborating since 1994 on their now on-going project called Exactitudes – a contraction of 'exact' and 'attitude', in an attempt to build as exhaustive as possible a photographic inventory of the meaningful styles endorsed by various groups of people in key cities in The Netherlands. The idea was to present a different, fresh and objective reflection on Dutch contemporary society focusing on the language of fashion as a mouthpiece for the multiple tribes identified by the project.

Soon it became obvious that adding an international perspective to the project would render it even more compelling both as a way to create an inventory of individual country-representative cities' specific styles and as a way to compare and contrast tribal similarities and idiosyncrasies across the world. Hence Exactitudes visited Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, New York and Bordeaux among others with the aim to eventually collate what the artists call the 'holy bible of contemporary tribal fashion'.

London is Exactitudes' new focus and their most challenging and exciting foreign project to date.

"We are so excited to be working on the London project. I think that the UK and London in particular can be seen as the inventor of youth style in a tribal way, more than any other world city. There is something very distinctive and original in the way Londoners approach fashion that should translate with clarity in our new work." says Ari Versluis.

Exactitudes' presentation of the tribes they isolate in their style analysis is akin to butterfly collecting and to some extent borrows elements of anthropological science in the way Ellie and Ari conduct their inventory. Once the leading tribes have been identified and their representatives have agreed to take part, they are always shot under the same lighting, frame, and photographic construction to allow the subject matter – fashion - to give out its message unbridled. Such standardisation brings about clarity in the tribes' messages, especially when comparing fashion styles – from swimwear to hoodies, across the world. Ultimately, however, beyond fashion it's at the people that Exactitudes is casting its anthropological eye asking: "Who are we?".

**Exactitudes at Selfridges runs from Tuesday 26 February to Sunday 20 April 2008.**

While Exactitudes creates their first inventory of the London tribes, highlights of all their past series will be exhibited in Selfridges' Ultralounge, the arts and events dedicated space of the London's store and situated in its lower ground floor.

From Friday 4 April **the London series** of Exactitudes will open to the public.

Exactitudes at Selfridges is curated by Raphaele Stopin and Michel Mallard and programmed NineAM and The Photographers' Gallery.

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### **Editor's notes:**

- Selfridges not only provides customers with an extraordinary shopping experience – it also offers entertainment and retail drama which the store has made its own under the name retail theatre. When the store first launch in 1909, it was the first to exhibit Louis Blériot's plane which had just crossed the Channel for the first time in history. Many exhibitions, concerts and theatrical experiences followed over the years, cementing the relationship between Selfridges and the arts.
- Selfridges is famous for its many creative collaborations with artists whether up and coming or already established. Those collaborations have multiplied especially since 2006 when Selfridges invited two of the most influential Chinese artists to produce exclusive installations for the store. "Follow Me" by Wang Qingsong became one of Selfridges most talked about window displays and "Eating the City", the edible miniature city which covered part of the shop floor by artist Song Dong, was also a big hit with visitors.
- **The Ultralounge** is in the lower ground floor of Selfridges' Oxford Street store. It was launched as a dedicated events space in February 2006, with Future Punk – a month-long celebration of the attitude that has dominated youth culture since its inception in 1976. Involved in Future Punk were Malcolm McLaren, legendary photographer Bob Gruen, Don Letts, The New York Dolls, The Buzzcocks, The Slits and The Long Blondes. Other Ultralounge events which took place in 2007 included the presentation of an exclusive video art installation called Luminous by Brian Eno; a celebration of Surrealism in tandem with the V&A; a bespoke retrospective of Swarovski's Crystal Palace chandelier collections; and coinciding with Frieze, Selfridges presented Lattice, an exclusive installation by Conrad Shawcross commissioned by the store.

### **About Selfridges**

·The business was founded by American entrepreneur Gordon Selfridge in 1909 and run by him until he retired in 1940 and took on the role of President. Gordon Selfridge died in 1947 and four years later Lewis's Investment Trust bought a controlling interest in Selfridges.

·In 1965 Charles Clore's British Shoe Corporation (subsequently the Sears Group) bought a controlling interest in Lewis's Investment Trust and in doing so acquired Selfridges.

·In 1998 the company was de-merged from the Sears Group and floated on the London Stock Exchange.

·In 2003 Galen Weston purchased Selfridges. He and his wife Hilary are closely involved with the development and growth of the company.

·Galen Weston is Chairman of the premier luxury goods company which, as well as Selfridges, includes Holt Renfrew in Canada and Brown Thomas in Ireland.

### **Contact**

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**[www.selfridges.com](http://www.selfridges.com)**